Bruce Diary Duplicate
Monday, February 26, 1951

"President Auriol is politically a Socialist and a disciple of the late Leon Blum. He has had a long and honorable career in French politics and has occupied many governmental positions. His present office is one of more dignity than political power. He has however created for himself a position of real influence in connection with the selection of prime ministers and the formation of their cabinets. He has also become extremely popular in France, having carried out the duties of his office in a most conscientious manner. He has been indefatigable in attending celebrations, presentations and manifestations of every kind, from the laying

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of cornerstones in obscure villages to riding up the Champs-Elysées on Bastille Day.

"He is from the Midi and is deeply attached to his native region of Toulouse. Like many méridionaux, he is gifted with a vivid imagination and a ready flow of language which is given full play both in oratorical flourishes and in private conversation. He is warm-hearted, demonstrative and affectionate. He is looking forward to his meeting with the President with great interest and exhilaration. He has a highly developed sense of humor, and everything that he does, including eating and drinking, is characterized by a rather extraordinary gusto. He is at the same time very dignified, and takes the responsibilities of his office most seriously.

"Mme Auriol is a very attractive lady with great charm, gracious manners, and extreme tact. She is deservedly popular in France and will, I am certain, make a favorable impression on the President and Mrs. Truman, as ~~will her husband.~~

"The Auriols do not speak English although the President has lately been taking lessons and hopes to be able to make a

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few introductory remarks in our language to his speeches. He will talk very frankly to the President about almost anything which comes into his head. I am inclined to believe that the subjects which preoccupy him the most at the present time are 1) Indochina, and 2) Germany. As regards the former he is very proud of his position as the father of the French Union. He has been favorable to the independence of the Associated States, but likes to think that they will be preserved as members of the French Union and occupy in relation to France somewhat the same status as do members of the British Commonwealth to Great Britain. On the second point he is in favor of integrating Germany into the Western European society of nations. He remains, however, very suspicious of the good faith of Germans and of what he conceives to be the possibility that sooner or later they may try to draw the Atlantic world into a military venture to reconquer their lost Eastern provinces.

"As regards his anti-communism there can be no doubt. He thoroughly distrusts the Russians.

"He is deservedly proud of his success in life, which was

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attained through his own efforts. His father was, as I remember, a glassmaker. Mme. Auriol's father was a baker. He has never lost his lively interest in the welfare of the great mass of little people in the country. He is gregarious and has a genuine love of meeting people and enthusiasm for everything that is novel to him.

"I do not know whether his good-looking son Paul Auriol will accompany him. I gather that his once beautiful daughter-in-law, whose face was shattered in an airplane accident -- she is one of the best-known pilots in France -- will not be with him. The President is devoted to her. She has just returned from the United States, where she has had a series of plastic operations, and he is deeply grateful for the many kindnesses she received while there.

"He is an ardent sportsman and throws himself into shooting, fishing and even into boar hunting on horseback with his customary enjoyment.

"All in all they are a very sympathetic couple and representative of much that is best in this country."

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